

Cucumber Almond Soup

**6 larger lemon cucumbers
1 smaller lemon cucumber
4 garlic cloves
1/2 t. sea salt
3/4 c. toasted almond slivers
2 slices of stale bread, cut into rough pieces
2 T. grape seed oil (or other mild oil)
1 1/2 c. plain yogurt
1/4 c. cold water
2 t. lemon juice
pinch of white pepper
1 large basil leaf (for garnish)
1 t. lemon zest (for garnish)**

Thoroughly wash and dry cucumbers. Slice a 1/4 inch off the top (stem side) of the 6 larger cucumbers. Using a spoon and knife as needed, scour and scoop out the insides of cucumbers and put the insides in a blender and set the “bowls” aside. Dice the smaller cucumber and set aside.

Mince the garlic and sprinkle with salt. Using the back of a wide knife blade, work the salt and garlic together until it forms a smooth paste. Scrap up the garlic and add to blender.

If walnuts aren't already toasted, do so by spreading on a baking sheet and placing in 200 F oven for about 15 minutes, until golden. Add toasted almonds to blender, reserving a couple for garnish. Pulse blender to start processing the ingredients. Add the bread and continue to process. When the mixture is fairly smooth, slowly add the grape seed oil and combine well. Next add the plain yogurt and process again until well combined. Finally add the cold water and lemon juice. Taste and season as needed with white pepper.

Stir (not blend!) the diced cucumber into the soup. Carefully spoon the soup into the cucumber “bowls”. Put tops on and chill for at least an hour. Before serving, remove tops and garnish soup with ribbons of basil, a pinch of lemon zest, and an almond sliver. Serve immediately. (makes 6 hor'dourve servings)